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AUTHOR Goulden, Nancy Rost
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ABSTRACT

The experience of Kansas communication educators in developing speaking and listening assessment has been characterized by unusual cooperation and collaboration among members of the educational community and the professional communication organizations at several different levels. In 1992, the Kansas State Legislature established the Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) system for all public schools in Kansas. Two of the QPA student outcomes applied directly to speaking and listening. The Kansas State Board of Education requested the Kansas Speech Communication Association (KSCA) help locate or create a speaking/listening assessment program. An ad hoc committee developed an 8-trait rubric, which paralleled a successful 6-trait writing rubric already implemented in Kansas. The program was field tested by 20 speech teachers at the KSCA convention in 1994. The state board of education accepted the program and disseminated it to districts. However, the legislature decided not to fund state-wide assessment. Small grants from the KSCA board have allowed further progress to be made on rater training and field testing. While a great deal of progress has been made, the task of developing a state-wide assessment program is not yet finished. An appendix presents the criteria for speaking and listening assessment, a description of assessment procedures, an explanation of the eight traits, a speaking and listening assessment score sheet, and an oral language assessment score sheet. (RS)

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PROGRESS IN K-12 COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS AT THE STATE LEVEL

Nancy Rost Goulden, Ph.D.
Kansas State University

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Progress in K-12 Speaking and Listening Assessment in Kansas

The charge related to K-12 assessment of oral communication knowledge and skills is different for each state. In spite of the unique nature of who will fulfill the responsibilities and in what way for each state, the stories of what has happened in other states can provide some guidance both for what seems to work and what pitfalls communication educators might avoid.

The Beginning

The Kansas experience has been characterized by unusual cooperation and collaboration between the members of the educational community and the professional communication organizations at several different levels. As in many states, the story of speaking and listening assessment begins with the State Legislature.

In 1992, the Kansas State Legislature under K.S.A. 72-6439 established the Quality Performance Accreditation system for all public schools in Kansas. Of the ten QPA Student Outcomes, two apply directly to speaking and listening.

> "(5) pupils have the communication skills necessary to live, learn, and work in a global society;"
>
> "(7) pupils work effectively both independently and in **groups** in order to live, learn and work in a global society;" (Furse, 1992, p. 283).

In addition, the QPA Student Outcomes also address assessment of student competencies. "(1) Teachers establish high expectations for learning and **monitoring pupil achievement through multiple**

assessment techniques" (Furse, 1992, p. 282). The document includes the requirement that "means of assessment" should be provided at "three benchmark levels in the **skills domains** of . . . communications, including . . . speaking and listening" (Furse, 1992, p. 283). This meant that the Act would require statewide assessment of speaking and listening skills.

The charge was given, but there was no plan of how the speaking and listening assessment would be conducted. The Kansas State Board of Education took the responsibility for initiating a series of assessments in other content fields. Not all assessments would come on board at the same time, and oral communication assessment would be one of the last assessment to be implemented. However, there was considerable activity at the school district and building levels and also at the state level to start establishing local and state goals and outcomes for communication as the first necessary step.

In 1993, the Kansas State Board of Education Outcomes Education Team's publication, *Kansas Curricular Standards for Communications*, was published and disseminated to the schools of Kansas. This document outlines outcomes and benchmarks for written and oral communication at the elementary, middle school and high school levels. A number of the committee members who established the outcomes were language arts teachers with background in oral communication or secondary speech teachers. Diana Carlin from Kansas University, an active participant in CAT and Kansas Speech Communication Association, was an influential

force on the team.

The first of the Kansas Essential Outcomes related directly to speaking and listening: "1. Learners will speak and write for a variety of audiences and purposes and listen and read for a variety of purposes" (Kansas State Board of Education Outcomes Education Team, 1993, p. 4). The Benchmarks for this outcome include the skills of composing and presenting speeches. The next Essential Outcome that addresses speaking and listening is: "7. Learners will demonstrate the interpersonal and group communication skills necessary to work with others" (Kansas State Board of Education Outcomes Education Team, 1993, p.).

While the first draft of the state communication standards was being refined, a representative of the Kansas State Board of Education approached the Kansas Speech Communication Association with a request to help locate or create a speaking/listening assessment program to meet the state needs for assessment in this area. The Kansas state speech communication organization has a strong, active, large membership of teachers who are vitally interested in what happens in their classrooms, schools, and through out the state. The KSCA President Lynne Ross created an ad hoc committee of five secondary speech teachers, one elementary school language arts consultant, and two university speech faculty. In addition, the language arts consultant from the State Board of Education was appointed as an ex official member.

KSCA members were very pleased that the State Board had come

to their professional organization rather than allowing outsiders to make unilateral decisions related to assessment in our field. However, the group also realized this was an enormous and challenging task. All members of the committee already had more on their professional plates than they could handle. Several of the secondary members were coaching and traveling throughout the year. The committee members lived and taught in different parts of the state, and it takes a long time to drive across Kansas east to west. What were we going to do and how were we going to do it?

Fulfilling the Charge

In the winter of 1993, the assessment committee started meeting at various location, mostly in the middle part of the state. Not all members could be at every meeting, but most members were supported by their local districts so that substitutes were hired to cover the teachers' classes. The first step was to gather relevant information. The SCA packet on assessment was ordered. The bibliography, SCA documents on assessment, and the summary of programs in other states from the packet were especially helpful.

Before the group made any decisions about the specific assessment program that would be recommended, they decided to clarify what their expectation for any oral communication assessment program would be. Consequently, the Kansas assessment committee created a document, *Criteria for Speaking and Listening Assessment*, based on the *SCA Criteria for Assessment of Oral*

Communication. (See Appendix.) In later months, the committee member often referred back to the touchstone of the criteria when making specific decision about assessment. This was one of the lessons from the Kansas experience. Take the time to set assessment criteria before you begin to worry about the logistics of your specific plan.

These SCA sources gave the committee a sense of what our possibilities were. The committee also studied the state QPA Act and *Standards for Communication* carefully so that any programs or policies adopted would support and assess the speaking and listening outcomes.

For the most part, the major decisions about what the Kansas speaking and listening assessment would be like can be traced back to either the *Criteria* or state guidelines. Perhaps the two most important criteria were: "[a]ssessments should . . . consider competence in more than one communication setting" and "[s]peaking and listening skill must be assessed through actual performance in social settings." The selection of which "communication settings" to use for assessment was related to the two oral communication outcomes from the state *Standards* and outcomes from the QPA document. Public speaking, group discussion and interpersonal are all listed in the state outcomes; however, the QPA documents specifically emphasizes working in groups and does not explicitly mention interpersonal communication. The teachers on the task force also felt that public speaking and group communication were the two skills areas

that are most frequently taught and/or used in the classroom.

With these two decisions in place, the group decided to create an assessment program especially for the schools of Kansas that "assessed actual performance" in the public speaking and small group discussion settings. The planning group envisioned the assessment situation as either (1) assessment within individual classrooms (raters assessing the group discussion and oral reports that are a part of an ongoing activity, assignment, or unit in any content area) or (2) assessment as a special event, such as thirty groups in the school gym using preplanned prompts to guide discussion and follow-up individual reports. (For a more complete explanation, see Appendix.)

These plans for a speaking and listening assessment were reported to the Kansas Speech Communication Association at the annual convention in Spring 1993. The membership voted unanimously to support the plan of the assessment committee and asked the committee to proceed with the development of the program.

The adoption and implementation of the Six Trait Writing Rubric has been very successful in Kansas. Many teachers in various content areas have been trained to use the rubric, and teachers of English report that using the rubric has altered and improved the teaching of writing. The ad hoc committee decided it would be an advantage to create an instrument that paralleled the Six Trait Writing Rubric as much as possible.

During school year 1993-94, committee members continued to

drive, meet, talk, write, talk some more, drink coffee, and rewrite. Gradually an eight trait rubric, four traits for each context, was created. The basic rubric was adapted for elementary and secondary levels. One page scoring guides were written for each context for each level. (See Appendix.) A tape of students communicating in the two contexts was created by one of the committee members to be used as a test tape for trial scoring based on the rubric. A rater training program was adapted to fit the assessment program.

The program was field-tested by approximately 20 speech teachers at the KSCA convention in 1994. The response again was uniformly positive. Based on the convention's endorsement, the task force members, prepared a fifty-page booklet that included the criteria, description of assessment situations, examples of projects and prompts, rubrics, scoring guides, and a\rater training program. The State Board of Education agreed to disseminate the booklet to school districts in Kansas.

At this time, KSCA believed their job was finished. The task force had worked on the assumption that once an assessment program had been designed, if the State Board of Education found the program acceptable, they would then through state funding complete the job of operationalizing and implementing the program for state-wide assessment. Just as we reached this point, the state Legislature decided not to fund assessment for speaking and listening, thereby rescinding the mandate for state-wide oral communication assessment.

It was difficult to tell if this was good news or bad news. Communication educators in the state had considered assessment as an opportunity to promote oral communication across the curriculum and within the language arts curriculum. With the legislative decision, oral communication moved from a central position back to a peripheral field of instruction. Many teachers looked on the decision as good news because of the great amount of time now being devoted to state-wide assessment in their schools. At least they didn't have to edge out time for one more mandated assessment.

Even though state-wide testing of oral communication was dead, at least for the present, many school systems had included communication goals in their local QPA plans and still needed fair and useful communication assessment programs. Without funding, the State Board of Education had no means to continue with the development of the communication assessment program. What we had was an assessment program stopped in mid-stride. The instrument needed to be field-testing and data collected to establish the reliability and validity, and provide feedback for revision. Means to train raters needed to be found. The State Board of Education again asked KSCA if the organization could help by creating anchor and training tapes to be used in rater training.

Lynne Ross and Nancy Goulden from Kansas State University requested that the KSCA Board support a video-taping project. The Board agreed to provide three $500 grants to three school

districts to video tape students in group and individual speaking situations from elementary, middle school, and high school classrooms. Eleven school districts in September 1995 submitted proposals for the grants. The three grants were awarded in October and with Ross and Goulden as consultants the three districts are currently making plans for taping their students as they speak in a variety of classroom activities and projects.

These tapes will supply the raw material for anchor tapes, training tapes, and experimental tapes that can be used to collect data to establish concurrent validity and rater reliability. We don't know where the resources will come from to support the completion of the program. Ross and Goulden through the State Board of Education applied for U.S. Department of Education Grant during the summer of 1995. The grant was not funded.

The future of the assessment program probably depends on the willingness of KSCA members to continue to contribute their time and expertise. Several members have the skill and knowledge to edit the tapes, conduct rater training, and set up rating sessions to collect validity and reliability data. Enthusiasm for "our assessment program" remains high, and my hunch is that KSCA will continue with modest financial support. Representatives of the State Board of Education continue to express their desire that an appropriate communication assessment program be available to the teachers of Kansas.

In fall 1994, a new state-wide committee of language arts

educators was convened to revise the state language arts standards. The first draft of that document is almost complete. In the new document, speaking and listening are given equal status and space with reading, writing and viewing in most of the standards rather than being spot-lighted in only two standards. In addition to the standards and benchmarks, vignettes of best teaching practices that illustrate the standards and benchmarks are being created. In many, perhaps most, vignettes students are talking in groups and presenting oral reports in addition to reading and writing. These trends suggest that when both the new standards and a completed speaking and listening assessment program are in place, they will provide Kansas teachers with a consistent package to guide and support speaking and listening instruction in Kansas.

This essay does appropriately focus on **progress**. Those involved with the Kansas project believe that a great deal of progress has been made. The task is obviously not yet finished. It has been rewarding for those involved. The speech communication community has very much appreciated the opportunity to function as the experts and to have a significant voice in how our students and our instruction will be assessed. We have been proud to use the expertise and leadership of our national organization. Our state organization has been able to carry out a difficult task that we didn't know we were capable of. There has been a climate of mutual respect and support between the communication educators and the administrators in Topeka. Those

of us in communication appreciate the high level of autonomy we have had in the process of creating the program. We hope to be able to complete the story of Kansas Speaking and Listening Assessment.

References

Furse, N.J. (1992). Kansas statues annotated, vol. 5A. Topeka, KS: Department of Administration.

Kansas State Board of Education Outcomes Education Team. (1993). Kansas curricular standards for communications. Topeka, KS: Kansas State Board of Education.

Appendix

CRITERIA FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING ASSESSMENT

This list is based on the SCA Criteria for the Assessment of Oral Communication. The Task Force on Assessment of the Kansas Speech Communication Association modified the criteria to guide assessment of speaking and listening in Kansas school.

General Criteria

1. Assessment should fulfill both accountability and instructional functions.

2. Assessment should be carried out by trained assessors.

3. Assessment should clearly distinguish speaking and listening from reading and writing.

3. Assessment should be sensitive to the effects of relevant physical and psychological disabilities on the assessment of competence.

4. Assessment should be based primarily on analytical data collected although a holistic impression may also be included.

Criteria for the Content of Assessment

1. Assessment should include both verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication and should consider competence in more than one communication setting.

Criteria for Assessment Instruments and Procedures

1. Speaking and listening skills must be assessed through actual performance in social settings.

2. Assessment instruments should describe the levels of development (e.g., emerging) of students.

3. Assessment instruments must meet acceptable standards for freedom from cultural, sexual, ethical, racial, age, and developmental bias.

4. Assessment instruments should be suitable for the grade levels being assessed.

5. Assessment instruments should be standardized and detailed enough so that individual responses will not be affected by an administrator's skill in administering the procedures.

6. Individuals administering assessment procedures for speaking and listening should have sufficient training by speech communication professional to make their assessment reliable.

KANSAS SPEECH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION

DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Speaking and listening will be assessed in two contexts: (1) during discussion within a small group and (2) while speaking individually before an audience about the group project.

1. **SMALL GROUP ASSESSMENT.**

   A. The group project must include: a description of the specific task to be accomplished, individual research required by students in order to complete the task, and extemporaneous group discussion.

   B. The prompt may be selected at the local level. School districts will have the option to use a group problem-solving situation that is a part of the curriculum within any content class or to create an assessment group problem-solving experience. Sample prompts are described for the grade school in Appendix A and for middle school and high school in Appendix B.

   C. The groups being assessed will be composed of not less than 3 students or more than 7 students. The school district will decide the makeup of groups and assign students to groups.

   D. Time guidelines should be used. It is recommended that groups be given sufficient time in order to complete their task and to ensure opportunities for representative speaking and listening behaviors to be assessed. Groups may meet more than once as long as one meeting is designated to be assessed or if all meetings are observed the assessors must remain the same. Only one score sheet will be used by each rater when evaluating each individual no matter how many meetings they observe. Groups that meet for less than 15-20 minutes will have difficulty being assessed accurately using this rubric.

   E. A minimum of two trained raters will observe and assess individual participants during the group discussion using a context-specific rubric. See pages 7-11 and pages 21-25 for group discussion rubrics. See Appendix C for rater training.

2. **INDIVIDUAL SPEAKING ASSESSMENT.**

A. Individual speeches must include: preparation time for the speaker, extemporaneous style of delivery, and an audience composed of, but not limited to, listeners not part of the original discussion group.

B. The thesis of the speech will be developed from the group experience. For example, speakers might report on the group process and the group findings, or support the group recommendations, or use any other topic relevant to the group task.

C. Time guidelines should be used. Individual school districts may determine the amount of preparation time for individual reports, ranging from several minutes after the conclusion of the group project to an interval of several days depending upon the context of the project. The intent is for the speeches to be planned but delivered extemporaneously, with limited notes if desired, meeting minimum time limits. Minimum time limits may be set locally. Students who speak for less than 2 minutes will have difficulty being assessed accurately using this rubric. Option: Questions may be asked of the speaker following the speech.

D. A minimum of two trained raters will observe and assess the presentation of individual speeches using a context-specific rubric. See pages 12-17 and pages 26-31 for individual speaking rubrics. See Appendix C for rater training.

ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION OUTCOME: Be a contributing member of a problem solving group.

The following rubric is used to assess group communication skills of middle school/junior high school and high school students.

1. Listens Actively
2. Participates Effectively
3. Demonstrates Awareness of and Sensitivity to Conversational Partners
4. Demonstrates Awareness of and Concern for Accomplishing Group Goals and Tasks

THE EXPLANATION OF THESE FOUR TRAITS THAT COMPOSE THE GROUP COMMUNICATION RUBRIC ARE ATTACHED.

Listens Actively

Active listening is critical to being an effective communicator. Listening is the most frequent type of communication, occupying more time than speaking, writing, or reading. One listens to gather information, to understand, to evaluate, or perhaps to help others solve problems. Being an active listener does not necessarily mean just keeping quiet. In fact, listeners who don't respond when they have the chance are probably not listening closely. In order to evaluate listening behavior one must observe nonverbal behavior, such as posture, facial expression and eye contact, as well as observe verbal behavior.

Scale:

1. Nonverbal responsiveness is minimal or nonexistent, suggesting boredom, indifference, or lack of involvement in discussion. Does not offer verbal contributions when the opportunity arises, does not ask questions to clarify information, and has difficulty in responding to questions... /OR/... continually interrupts speakers, does not let others verbalize entire messages, has difficulty taking turns conversing, is only interested in their own opinions and not comments from others.

3. Nonverbal responsiveness demonstrates attention to others as they speak. Offers verbal feedback that acknowledges and builds on what others say or do. When given the opportunity, asks for information and gives responses which indicates attention to the topic of discussion. Takes turns talking without monopolizing the discussion.

5. Nonverbal responsiveness demonstrates active interest and involvement in the situation. Enthusiastically takes turns in conversation and demonstrates interest in what others have to say by allowing others to complete their messages. Asks probing questions of others, provides insightful responses to questions, and occasionally paraphrases what others have said in order to clarify understanding and allow corrective feedback.

Participates Effectively

In order to be a contributing member of a group, participants must be willing to voice ideas, opinions, and share experiences. However, participation cannot be measured solely on the quantity of verbalizing, but the quality of the participation must also be considered. When participating in a group members must be able to express their thoughts clearly and effectively in order to be understood. Communicating to be understood involves language choice, the logical order and placement of ideas, support for their ideas and opinions, and clear vocal expression.

Scale:

1. Contributions are minimal or nonexistent. When contributes uses language that is vague, inaccurate, or offensive. Does not speak clearly and/or loudly enough to be understood. Does not have information to share. It is difficult to follow the sequence or logic of their contributions. Their comments are not relevant to the discussion taking place.

3. Contributions promote discussion. Uses language that does not offend and helps to create mutual understanding of the issues under discussion. Speaks clearly and loudly enough to be understood. Has information to share that is beyond personal opinion such as examples from magazines, books, other students, teachers, or t.v. shows. Their comments are easy to follow, make sense, and are relevant to the discussion taking place.

5. Contributions are valuable to the outcome of the groups discussion. Uses language that is vivid and concrete which enhances the mutual understanding of the issues under discussion. Refers to information that is new to group and very specific: such as statistics, illustrations, examples, or comparisons. Uses sources of information that have exceptional credibility with group members. Is able to give fresh perspectives. Comments are exceptionally clear and stimulate the discussion.

Demonstrates Awareness Of and Sensitivity To Conversational Partners

A problem solving group has two dimensions: concern for people and concern for completing the task. An effective communicator in a group has to be sensitive to both concerns. This trait demonstrates concern for people. Proficient communicators use various means to convey their awareness of and concern for people in the social context of a group: they are courteous, they are tactful in what they say, they establish rapport, they expect differences of opinion and show respect for ideas and opinions that are different from their own, they encourage others to contribute ideas and opinions, they support and praise others ideas and opinions, they help relieve tension or resolve conflict if necessary.

Scale:

1. Appears unaware of or indifferent to the feelings and ideas of other group members. Pays no attention to the consequences of his/her speech or actions on others in the group; neither acknowledges nor responds to others contributions or feedback; may give the impression of being rude. May waste the group's time with unnecessary joking around or showing off. May exclude themselves entirely and be a non-participant. May demonstrate dysfunctional behaviors that are ego centered and nonproductive such as: being stubborn beyond reason, making personal attacks on others, or monopolizing the discussion.

3. Is courteous and tactful in interactions with other group members. Makes opinions and positions clear without destroying group morale or cohesiveness. Avoids agreeing with everyone all the time on every issue only for the sake of harmony. Avoids dysfunctional behaviors that are ego centered and nonproductive.

5. Plays a leadership role by taking responsibility for maintaining the social climate of the group. Demonstrates this role by being attentive and alert to the needs of group members. Does not allow the group to exclude people willing to share opinions. Appears sincere; helps others become involved in the discussion; makes sure all opinions are expressed before discussion moves forward; helps clarify issues in dispute and searches for areas of common ground without dominating the group.

Demonstrates Awareness Of and Concern for Accomplishing Group Goals and Tasks

A problem solving group has two dimensions: concern for people and concern for completing the task. An effective communicator in a group has to be sensitive to both concerns. This trait demonstrates concern for working toward the completion of the task. Proficient communicators will recognize the needs of the situation and/or task and respond appropriately by taking a role as task leader and/or active participant enabling the group to do their work. Either role will help the group accomplish their work by supplying information, helping the group to identify goals, summarizing progress or providing transitions when needed, suggesting an agenda or supplying structure for the discussion, keeping the group focused on the task, ensuring any records or notes are kept if needed, and being willing to analyze suggestions or proposals by playing the devil's advocate or ensuring such analysis takes place. These behaviors should help focus the discussion without group members feeling dominated or manipulated. These behaviors should enhance group progress and the groups need to meet imposed time limits or deadlines.

Scale:

1. Provides comments and behaviors that suggest unawareness or indifference to what needs to be accomplished by the group. Comments may distract the group from their goal and may often seem to be unrelated to the task at hand. Members do not have to actively interfere with the group progress to score in this category; if they withdraw and/or allow the group to become disorganized and unfocused when they could have supplied counter behaviors then they can also be demonstrating unawareness or indifference to the task needs of the group.

3. Provides comments that suggest awareness of the task and situation. Contributes as an active participant focused on the topic and/or task. This could be done by asking timely questions, suggesting procedures to follow, or contributing appropriate information. May remind group of task when discussion becomes unproductive or unfocused.

5. Plays a leadership role that helps guide the group through the assigned task by helping the group get started, or suggesting directions to follow, or helping to clarify the goals or task they face. Takes initiative in focusing the group and helps group avoid unproductive dialogue while providing group procedures that facilitate a thorough discussion of all sides of an issue. Does not dominate or manipulate the group, but provides direction which helps the group make progress.

ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION OUTCOME: Be able to give a speech that reports the finding and conclusions of the group project to an audience.

The following rubric is used to assess the speaker-to-audience communication skills of junior high and senior high school students:

1. Uses Appropriate Language

2. Demonstrates an Appropriate Presentational/Delivery Style

3. Develops Effective Content

4. Demonstrates Adaptation to the Specific Audience

5. (Optional) Develops a spontaneous and effective response to one or more questions after the report

THE EXPLANATION OF THESE FOUR TRAITS THAT COMPOSE THE SPEAKER-TO-AUDIENCE COMMUNICATION RUBRIC ARE ATTACHED.

Uses Appropriate Language

Competence in the use of language when speaking to an audience is based on three components: first, the clarity of the speaker's language for conveying meaning; second, the speaker's ability to use language to create his/her own unique personal style; and finally, the appropriateness of language choices to the specific speaking situation. All three component are related to both the choice of words and the arrangement of words. Speaker's vocabulary choices should fit the audience. Concrete, specific, accurate, vivid language should be selected to maintain audience interest and promote understanding. A competent communicator organizes words within sentences effectively. Language choices may establish the speaker's sincerity, enthusiasm, and personal confidence. Each speaker's language choices should reflect that speaker's authentic communication style and will not necessarily be the same as another speaker's.

Scale:

1. Uses language that is vague, generalized, inaccurate, offensive to specific groups. Language choices sound artificial or more appropriate for written that oral discourse. Sentence construction seems awkward, unclear or even unfinished. Language choices undercut perceptions of speaker's sincerity, conviction, confidence.

3. For the most part uses clear, specific, concrete language with few errors. Does not use terms that are obviously offensive to specific groups. Language choices reflect the conventional oral vocabulary of the audience; uses language that conveys his/her personality and sincerity. Sentence structure is direct; avoids convoluted patterns and verbosity.

5. Creates unusual clarity and understanding by using vivid, specific, concrete, accurate language. When talking about specific groups, uses inclusive or sensitive language. Word choices are rich and varied and move well beyond the mundane, are even eloquent, yet, there is no pomposity or artifice. Creates memorable word pictures and phrases that reflect the speaker's individuality.

Demonstrates an Appropriate Presentational/Delivery Style

Presentational/Delivery Style refers to all voice and body behaviors that accompany the speaker's words when speaking to the audience. Voice behaviors include vocal quality, volume, articulation, pronunciation, rate, emphasis, rhythm, fluency. Body behaviors include facial expression, eye contact, gestures, posture, body movements. These behaviors occur and are interpreted in clusters. Raters should not look for or count specific behaviors unless those behaviors are so outrageous or pronounced that they interfere with transmission of the message. Speaker's vocal and body behaviors are the means by which a speaker makes real connection with the audience. To be effective, those choices must be appropriate for the situation of speaking and for the expectations of the audience. They also are the elements the speaker uses to produce his/her own unique style of speaking.

Scale:

1. Nervous movements, vocal disfluencies, inappropriate volume, or poor articulation are so pervasive that message is blocked. Uses a stylized, mechanical vocal delivery. Reads or recites from memory rather than talking directly with the audience. Presentation draws into question speaker's sincerity, conviction, confidence. Voice and body movements are too informal for the situation.

3. For the most part, vocal and body behaviors do not detract from message. Presentation represents speaker's personality and sincerity. Speaker behaviors suggest a level of formality that reflects seriousness of situation, but still maintains a natural spontaneous manner. Vocal delivery mirrors the natural rhythms, volume, and pitch changes of conversation. Refers to notes but primarily **talks** with the audience.

5. Presentation is natural, spontaneous, confident, free of breaks or distracting physical behaviors. The speaker appears to have forgotten his/her performance and is intent on sharing the message with the audience. Through the use of a variety of exceptional voice and body behaviors, the message is expanded and enhanced.

Demonstrates Effective Content

Effective oral communication is not only based on **oral presentation** of ideas, but also includes the **content** of messages as an inextricable part of the communication process. To be a proficient communicator, one has to have something to say as well as be able to share that meaning with others. Effective speech content reflects two elements: (1) the quality of ideas and information the student presents and (2) the organization of the content.

Scale:

1. Presents overly familiar or even trite ideas and information. Information has low interest level. Explanations are incomplete or confusing. Makes unsupported assertions; uses own opinion as if it is fact. Reasoning is weak or flawed by such fallacies as generalizations based on one example, name calling or personal attacks. Jumps from topic to topic rather than following an identifiable plan of organization. Speech is significantly shorter or longer than assigned or expected time guideline.

3. Presents some "new" information or uses original approaches for familiar information. Some of the information is at a high interest level; explanations and descriptions are utilitarian and accurate. Gives some support for assertions although the support may only be personal experience or examples; separates opinion from fact. There are no glaring reasoning or logic errors or fallacies; arguments are generally valid. Overall the message makes sense. The content moves logically from one topic to the next; the message has focus and cohesion. Speech falls within expected time limits.

5. Presents substantive information that sustains interest; may introduce a new perspective. Explanations and descriptions are impeccably clear and memorable; reasoning is valid. Uses support from credible outside sources. Either openly shares organizational plan with audience or progress of content is so clear and logical that understanding of the message requires little or no effort.

Demonstrates Adaption to the Specific Audience

Speakers who are competent at adapting to the audience recognize the makeup of the audience and are aware of commonalities shared by audience members. This awareness of the audience may be based on familiarity with the actual audience members or result from sensitivity to gender, obvious ethnic backgrounds, and age or education level. The proficient communicator adjusts the message so it applies specifically to the audience present. In addition the competent speaker will be aware of feedback from the audience while speaking and use that feedback to make adjustments that fit the immediate needs of the audience.

Scale:

1. Message is inappropriate for the audience because it is too difficult or too simple. Message addresses a different audience (such as advising an audience of 14-year-olds to take early retirement). Speech is too formal or informal for audience expectations. Does not make statements that apply directly to audience. Does not make any special attempts to assure audience understanding of information. Ignores audience feedback or does not adjust to audience feedback.

3. For the most part, message reflects awareness of audience and may refer to common interests and experiences. Level of formality or decorum is within the range of audience expectations. Selects information that is readily understood by the specific audience. Notices and at times attempts clarification or expansion in response to audience feedback.

5. It is clear by the excellent fit of speech content and delivery to audience knowledge and interest levels that the speaker's primary focus is making sure the message connects to the audience. Uses awareness of audience to avoid alienation and build on common agreement. Often directly refers to the audience and their needs, background, and responses. Is very aware of audience feedback and makes adjustments needed for revitalizing interest or reducing confusion.

Develops a Spontaneous and Effective Response to One or More Questions after the Report

Responding competently to questions requires speaker perception that responses are a communication opportunity and that the speaker must be willing to regard the exchange seriously and put forth some effort to create a competent response.

Scale:

1. Responds with a monosyllable, short phrase or clause, or "witty" remark, but does not expand on the answer. Or may attempt to develop the response, but answer is vague, contradictory, trite or so far off the topic of the question that audience gains little or no information or enlightenment. Answer is wordy, repetitive, rambling.

3. Makes a serious effort to address the question asked and provide a meaningful response. Attempts to present the response in an organized format and exclude extraneous comments.

5. Refers to the question and then gives a direct, meaningful response that is succinct but sufficient. Supports answer with reference to information presented earlier or additional information. Response is structured in such a way that audience can easily follow the flow of the answer.

KSCA SPEAKING AND LISTENING ASSESSMENT SCORE SHEET

Middle School/Junior High and High School Level

Small Group Discussion Setting

Student_____

Circle the number that best fits the proficiency level for each trait. 1 = lacks proficiency; 3 = satisfactory proficiency; 5 = outstanding proficiency. Use numbers 2 and 4 when proficiency level falls between other numbers.

LISTENS ACTIVELY TO OTHERS 1 2 3 4 5

Behaviors

attends to speaker(s)
respond verbally
builds on other's statements
does not interrupt
takes turns

PARTICIPATES EFFECTIVELY IN DISCUSSION 1 2 3 4 5

Behaviors

makes useful contributions
uses socially appropriate language
can be heard and understood
language precise and clear
uses sources beyond personal opinion
sequence of comments logical
comments relevant

DEMONSTRATES AWARENESS OF AND SENSITIVITY TO CONVERSATIONAL PARTNERS 1 2 3 4 5

Behaviors

courteous and tactful
comments show awareness of others and situation
faithful to own viewpoint
avoids ego-centered, nonproductive behaviors
helps others be active participants

DEMONSTRATES AWARENESS OF AND CONCERN FOR ACCOMPLISHING GROUP GOALS AND TASKS 1 2 3 4 5

Behaviors

comments show awareness of task
actively contributes to task work
guides group through task
leads group back to task
does not dominate or manipulate

KSCA ORAL LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT SCORE SHEET

Middle School/Junior High and Senior High School Level

Individual Speaking to Group Setting

Student_____

Circle the number that best fits the proficiency level for each trait. 1 = lacks proficiency; 3 = satisfactory proficiency; 5 = outstanding proficiency. Use numbers 2 and 4 when proficiency level falls between other numbers.

USES APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE 1 2 3 4 5

Behaviors

clear, specific, accurate
free from errors
socially sensitive
fits audience
reveals speaker's personality/sincerity

DEMONSTRATES AN APPROPRIATE PRESENTATIONAL/DELIVERY STYLE 1 2 3 4 5

Behaviors

voice behaviors do not distract
body behaviors do not distract
appropriate behaviors for situation
has a natural, spontaneous manner
delivery promotes connection with audience

DEVELOPS EFFECTIVE CONTENT 1 2 3 4 5

Behaviors

"new" information or original approach
information of high interest
information useful and accurate
uses sources beyond personal opinion
sound reasoning
logical sequence
overall message has focus and cohesion

DEMONSTRATES ADAPTATION TO THE SPECIFIC AUDIENCE 1 2 3 4 5

Behavior

message at appropriate difficulty level
speaker refers to common interest/background
speaker makes information clear (understandable)
notices feedback and adjusts